



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q: What is CERT?**

A: CERT stands for Community Emergency Response Team. The program provides appropriate training to citizen volunteers to enable them to provide immediate assistance to themselves, their families, and their communities during local disasters or emergencies, such as floods, tornadoes, and earthquakes. The training CERT members receive makes them valuable asset to local residents and public safety agencies.

CERT members receive training to suppress small fires, conduct light search and rescue, stabilize and organize the scene until professional help arrives, and provide basic triage and medical assistance. Local public safety personnel conduct CERT training and provide members the basic skills prescribed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Office of Domestic Preparedness. CERT members are also educated on the standard operating procedures used by their county during an emergency.

The CERT program **IS NOT** intended to replace highly trained, professional first responders such as firefighters, emergency medical personnel or law enforcement officials.

**Q: What areas can benefit from CERT?**

A: Anywhere there is a concentration of people, is a prime location for a CERT program. Neighborhoods, places of worship, schools, businesses, government centers, and manufacturing plants are all good examples of locations that could benefit from a CERT program.

**Q: How can my community start a CERT program?**

A: Currently, 47 counties in Indiana participate in the CERT program. Contact your county's local Emergency Management Agency to find out if your county is one of them.



If your county is a participant in CERT, you can request recruitment and training of a CERT or ask to join an existing CERT.

A signed agreement between the Indiana Department of Homeland Security and a county's commissioners is necessary to receive funding and support for a local CERT program.

So, if your county is not currently a CERT participant, contact your county commissioners to let them know you want the program! They can contact the Indiana Department of Homeland Security to learn how to bring this beneficial response program to your area.

**Q: Is the CERT program expensive to run?**

A: No. The Indiana Department of Homeland Security provides enrolled counties the necessary funding to conduct the CERT program. (IDHS utilizes a portion of funds received through the US Department of Homeland Security's Office of Domestic Preparedness to support CERT in Indiana.)

**Q: How can I become a CERT team member?**

A: Contact your county's Emergency Management Agency to complete an application and learn more on joining a CERT in your area. In some circumstances, a local background check is required.

After the appropriate paperwork is completed, you will participate in the required CERT training to build appropriate competencies and skills. After completing training, you will receive an assignment to a CERT team near you.

**Q: Can anyone be a CERT team member?**

A: There is a job for almost everyone in a CERT. At times, strenuous tasks may limit some individuals' ability to assist. However, these individuals can assist by calming and tending to victims or completing necessary documentation.

Although three counties in Indiana currently have CERT in high schools, members under the age of 18 operate under a limited scope of work. The desire to help others displayed by teenage CERT members is impressive and encouraged. These members can serve as beneficial assistance at an emergency scene while having limited exposure to danger.

CERT members 18 and older may participate in all CERT functions.

**Q: How long does CERT training last?**

A: The CERT course requires least 24 hours of training. If a county so desires to include further detailed training, additional time may be required. Typically, most counties dedicate approximately two to three hours per week over an eight to ten week period to complete training.



**Q: What does CERT training include?**

A: CERT trainees receive the following during training:

- An introduction to CERT.
- Two instruction units on medical operations, including triage, treatment and first aid.
- Basic fire suppression instruction.
- Basic search and rescue techniques instruction.
- How to organize and conduct operations instruction.
- CERT role in a terrorist initiated emergency.
- Disaster psychology instruction to help victims cope with the situation.

After completing the above, CERT members participate in a mock emergency exercise, where the team members respond utilizing and demonstrating the skills they acquired.

CERT members receive a certificate from the Indiana Department of Homeland Security to acknowledge completion of training.

**Q: How many people are in a CERT team?**

A: The recommended number of trained volunteers per team is ten (10).

**Q: Do CERT members receive any additional/supplemental training?**

A: CERT teams receive periodic refresher training and regularly participate in emergency exercises in their county. In addition, most county Emergency Management Agencies meet with their CERT teams at least once per quarter for training and information updates.

Some counties conduct enhanced basic CERT training by providing training in Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation, Automated Emergency Defibrillator and even chain saw operation. There are also counties in Indiana teaching the prerequisites for CERT members to receive licensing as Ham Radio operators.

**Q: Can a CERT from Indiana be called upon for use in another state if there is a national emergency?**

A: Yes. CERT training is standard throughout the United States allowing CERT members to serve in communities other than their own.

In 2004, 30 Indiana CERT volunteers went to Florida and Alabama to assist residents of those states after devastating hurricanes in 2004.